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ADDRESS BY DON DUNSTAN, PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, TO THE
AUSTRALIAN ALUMNI, SINGAPORE.

Saturday, 17th July, 1971.

MR. PRESIDENT,

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND INVITATION TO ADDRESS YOU HERE TODAY.

AS YOU WOULD KNOW, MY VISIT TO SINGAPORE IS A SHORT ONE;

I WISH IT COULD BE LONGER.

I FIND SINGAPORE A MOST ATTRACTIVE AND CONGENIAL CITY, AND
ONE WITH WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO SEE AUSTRALIA, AND MY STATE,
FORM THE CLOSEST RELATIONSHIP.

PAGE 2.

HOWEVER, MY PARLIAMENT IS SITTING AT THE MOMENT; INDULGING
ITSELF, AS PARLIAMENTS ARE WONT TO DO, IN THE VERBAL EXCESSES
AND BAROQUE GENERALITIES OF THE ADDRESS IN REPLY.

I WILL RETURN TO ADELAIDE, AFTER VISITING JAPAN, HONG KONG
AND DJAKARTA, PROBABLY JUST AS THE LAST SPEAKER GASPS HIS WAY
TO A HALT.

THIS IS MY SECOND VISIT TO SINGAPORE IN SOME NINE MONTHS AND MY
BASIC PURPOSE FOR BEING HERE - AND GENERALLY FOR VISITING
MAJOR POPULATION CENTRES IN THE EAST ASIAN REGION - IS TO FOLLOW-
UP CONTACTS MADE ON MY PREVIOUS VISIT WITH TRADE AND INVESTMENT
LEADERS OF BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

PAGE 3.

WE HAVE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AT THE MOMENT A MOST AMBITIOUS PLAN FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT DIVERSIFICATION.

MANY OF YOU WOULD KNOW THAT FOR NIGH ON A HUNDRED YEARS NOW AUSTRALIA'S MAIN TRADING TIES (THAT IS, THE ONES WHICH NOT ONLY PLAYED A DETERMINANT ECONOMIC EFFECT, BUT ALSO ONES WHICH FORGED POLITICAL LINKS) HAVE BEEN WITH EITHER ENGLISH SPEAKING MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH, OR WITH EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA AND SUCH OTHER DEVELOPED AREAS.

THIS HAS OF COURSE CHANGED MARKEDLY IN THE PAST DECADE - AND IS CONTINUING TO DO SO WITH A RAPIDITY AND DYNAMISM THAT WOULD HAVE SHOCKED AND BEWILDERED PREVIOUS GENERATIONS OF AUSTRALIANS.

PAGE 4.

AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST TRADING PARTNER NOW IS JAPAN. NORTH AMERICA, WESTERN EUROPE AND THE U.K. FOLLOW IN THAT ORDER.

AND WITH THE POSSIBLE ENTRY OF THE U.K. INTO THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, AND THE CONSEQUENT IMPOSITION OF HIGH TARIFF BARRIERS AGAINST AUSTRALIAN GOODS THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN SOLD IN EUROPE, THE COURSE FOR AUSTRALIA AS A TRADING AND MANUFACTURING NATION IS AUTOMATICALLY ONE TIED IN WITH THE DEVELOPING SITUATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC.

THIS IS NATURAL. IT'S WHERE WE ARE, AS A PEOPLE. IT'S WHERE WE'LL STAY. AND IT IS THE REGION WHICH IS EXERTING AN EVER INCREASING CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON AUSTRALIA.

PAGE 5.

BEFORE THE LAST WAR AUSTRALIANS, CULTURALLY AND AS BUSINESSMEN, LOOKED AT A WORLD MAP, AND APART FROM SEEING ALL THE PARTS IN RED WHICH SIGNIFIED THE BOUNDS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, TENDED TO BLANK OUT THE REST. THE CITIZENS OF, FOR INSTANCE, ADELAIDE, MAY HAVE BEEN THIRTEEN THOUSAND MILES AWAY FROM LONDON - BUT DISTANCE STRENGTHENED RATHER THAN DIMINISHED OUR WHITE ANGLO SAXON PROTESTANT ISOLATIONISM.

AND THIS ALLIED WITH OUR ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON BRITAIN CREATED THE KIND OF ARROGANT AND BULL-HEADED AUSSIE THAT UNFORTUNATELY STILL REMAINS AS ONE OF OUR IMAGES.

PAGE 6.

OUR GROWING DEPENDENCE AND INTERACTION WITH OUR ASIAN AND PACIFIC NEIGHBOURS IS CHANGING THIS, AS I HAVE SAID.

A NEW GENERATION OF AUSTRALIANS HAS EMERGED WHICH HAS, BY AND LARGE, A MUCH MORE REALISTIC AND MUCH LESS ARROGANT ASSESSMENT OF HOW AUSTRALIANS, AS A PEOPLE, STAND AND ARE SEEN TO STAND BY THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, AND ESPECIALLY BY THE PEOPLE OF OUR IMMEDIATE REGION.

THIS NEW GENERATION KNOWS THAT AS A NATION WE ARE, GENERALLY SPEAKING, FAIRLY DYNAMIC AND CREATIVE. WE LIVE WELL. WE HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY. AND IT KNOWS THAT WE HAVE THE COMPLACENCIES WHICH GO WITH SUCH PRIVILEGES, SUFFER FROM THE DANGERS THAT SUCH COMPLACENCY PRODUCES.

PAGE 7.

AND PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST REAL DANGERS IN THIS IS THE DELUSIVE IDEA THAT BECAUSE WE'VE MADE A GO OF DEVELOPING OUR LAND, WE'RE SOMEHOW BETTER OR MORE CIVILISED THAN THOSE WHO IN PURELY MATERIALISTIC TERMS ARE ONLY JUST STARTING TO MAKE A GO OF THEIRS.

SUCH DELUSIONS OF CULTURAL GRANDEUR STILL EXIST IN AUSTRALIA - AS THEY DO IN WESTERN EUROPE, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND THE ANGLO SAXON PART OF NORTH AMERICA.

BUT IT IS CHANGING GENERALLY, UNDER THE PRESSURE OF INTERNATIONALISM IN POLITICS, REGIONAL RATIONALISATION IN TRADE, AND AESTHETIC DISCOVERY.

PAGE 8.

FOR INSTANCE, WITH REGARD TO AESTHETICS, THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN WORLD THIS CENTURY THERE HAS BEEN AN AESTHETIC REVOLUTION WHICH HAS FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED THE WAY PEOPLE SEE THE WORLD ABOUT THEM AND THE OBJECTS IN IT.

AND IT IS CLEAR THAT AMONG THE VERY MANY TRADITIONS AND MOVEMENTS WHICH WENT TOWARDS MAKING THIS REVOLUTION, ONE OF THE CENTRAL ONES WAS THE DISCOVERY OF EASTERN ART BY WESTERN ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN.

IN THIS, THE INFLUENCE OF JAPAN AND CHINA HAS BEEN PREDOMINANT - THESE COUNTRIES HAVE TAUGHT THE WEST AN ENTIRELY NEW ASSESSMENT OF SHAPE, TEXTURE, AND THE SUBTLETIES OF ASYMMETRY.

TOGETHER WITH THIS NEW INFLUENCE ON OUR ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN AND ARCHITECTS, HAS EMERGED A COMPLETELY NEW ASSESSMENT OF THE CULTURAL AND CIVILISED ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EAST. IN OTHER WORDS, THE WEST THIS CENTURY HAS AT LAST RECOGNISED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN AND ARE OTHER GREAT CIVILISATIONS THAN THEIR OWN. THE WEST HAS NOW CONCEALED THAT THE HUMAN SPIRIT HAS RAISED GREAT MONUMENTS NOT ONLY IN FLORENCE, BUT IN KYOTO; NOT ONLY ^NIS PARIS, BUT IN PEKING.

AS A PREDOMINANTLY EUROPEAN NATION AUSTRALIAN⁽¹⁾ IS IN THE UNIQUE POSITION OF PARTAKING OF EUROPEAN CULTURAL TRADITIONS WHILE BEING PLACED GEOGRAPHICALLY WHERE EQUALLY GREAT TRADITIONS OBTAIN. THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE US. IN MANY WAYS THEY ALREADY ARE INFLUENCING US.

IN ADDITION, WE FIND THAT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REALITIES ARE TYING US CLOSER AND CLOSER TO OUR NEIGHBOURS. AND THIS CAN ONLY BE TO THE GOOD, FOR AUSTRALIA IS A SOCIETY WHICH NEEDS TO BROADEN ITS ETHNIC AND CULTURAL VISION. AND I ALSO BELIEVE THAT THIS CAN GO TWO WAYS.

ASIAN NATIONS CAN LEARN FROM OUR FAIRLY SOLID AND EFFECTIVE TRADITIONS OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, IDEALS OF PUBLIC MODERATION, AND CIVIL LIBERTY.

(OF COURSE, WHEN I HOLD AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY UP AS A CRITERION OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR, I DO NOT SUGGEST IT IS WITHOUT FAULT. IN FACT IT IS OFTEN SERIOUSLY AT FAULT.) BUT I DO BELIEVE THAT THE FORM OF PARLIAMENTARY AND CABINET GOVERNMENT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED IN AUSTRALIA IS POTENTIALLY A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE FORM OF DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION. BY AND LARGE, IT IS ABLE TO BOTH MAKE EFFECTIVE EXECUTIVE DECISIONS AND AT THE SAME TIME RESPOND TO SHIFTS OF EMPHASIS AND OPINION IN THE POPULATION AS A WHOLE.

AND I THINK THAT WE WILL SHORTLY SEE THE RESULT OF SUCH A SHIFT WITH REGARD TO AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION POLICIES.

AT THE HEIGHT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, THE RACIALISM EXPRESSED BY AUSTRALIANS WAS VERY MARKED. IT HAD TWO COMPONENTS, ANGLO SAXON ARROGANCE AND IGNORANCE, AND FEAR OF ECONOMIC DEPRESSION. WITH REFERENCE TO THE LATTER, THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA, IN THE LATE 1880's, WAS PERHAPS THE LEADING FACTION IN THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY WHICH ARGUED AND SOMETIMES FOUGHT TO MAINTAIN AUSTRALIA AS A BASTION OF WHITE (OR PINKO-GREY) ANGLO SAXON PURITY.

AND THE MOVEMENT WAS MOTIVATED IN ITS HARSHNESS BY THE VERY REAL INROADS BEING MADE BY THE IMPORTATION OF CHEAP COOLIE LABOUR BY SUGAR PLANTERS AND THE LIKE, AND BY THE INDUSTRIOUSNESS OF THE CHINESE WHO CAME TO THE GOLDFIELDS IN THOUSANDS AND DISRUPTED THE PLANS OF WHITE MINERS FOR GOVERNMENT CONCESSIONS ON MINING LEASES AND LICENCES.

THIS IS TO PUT THE SITUATION IN A VERY GENERALISED WAY - BUT IT IS TRUE THAT THE SIX SELF-GOVERNING AUSTRALIAN COLONIES OF THE TIME SAW ASIA AS A CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC THREAT, AND SO TARIFF BARRIERS AND IMMIGRATION BARRIERS WERE SET UP IN SUCH A WAY THAT, NOW, IN 1971, WE'RE STILL HAVING TROUBLE DISMANTLING THEM.

BUT AS I SAID EARLIER, WE ARE CHANGING AS A NATION. IT IS TRUE THAT WE STILL HAVE A NUMBER OF PONDEROUS TROGLODYTES SHUFFLING THROUGH OUR NATION'S CORRIDORS OF POWER, TO WHOM THE IDEA OF RACIAL AND CULTURAL EQUALITY IS ANATHEMA.

BUT THEN, THEY WILL ALWAYS EXIST IN ANY NATION. FOR INSTANCE, THE TRADITIONS OF JAPANESE ISOLATIONISM ARE JUST AS PRONOUNCED AS THE ANGLO SAXON AND AUSTRALIAN VARIETIES.

BUT TO RETURN TO OUR TROGLODYTES, SUCH PEOPLE OF COURSE FIND ANYTHING OF AN EFFECTIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AND HUMAN NATURE A CONSPIRATORIAL ATTACK ON A GOD-GIVEN STATUS QUO - NO MATTER WHETHER IN THE AREA OF RATIONAL IMMIGRATION POLICIES, OR IMPROVED SOCIAL SERVICES, OR INCREASED EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE. BUT THEY ARE DYING OUT. THERE IS A PROCESS OF NATURAL SELECTION IN THE WORLDS OF FLORA, FAUNA, AND POLITICIANS. AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST IN POLITICS MEANS THE SURVIVAL OF HE WHO IS MOST CLOSELY ATTUNED TO NOT ONLY HOW PEOPLE ARE THINKING CURRENTLY, BUT HOW THEIR EMPHASES ARE CHANGING.

NOW ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING CHANGES IN SOCIAL/POLITICAL EMPHASIS IN AUSTRALIA OVER THE PAST TEN OR TWENTY YEARS HAS BEEN THE WAY THE WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY AS AN ACCEPTABLE POLICY AT BOTH DIPLOMATIC AND DOMESTIC LEVELS HAS LOST ITS PERSUASIVE POWER AS AN ELECTORAL ISSUE.

THINKING PEOPLE OF PROGRESSIVE CAST, IN PUBLIC OFFICE AND IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY GENERALLY, NO LONGER ARGUE THAT IT SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AS A RIGID RULE.

I BELIEVE A GREAT MAJORITY REJECT THE POLICY'S ASSUMPTIONS OUTRIGHT.

IN FACT, EVEN THE PRESENT AUSTRALIAN COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT, WHICH ADMINISTERS OUR IMMIGRATION POLICY NOW, SPRINGS TO THE DEFENCE OF ITS POLICY NOT ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT IS RESTRICTIVE AND HAS A NECESSARY AND USEFUL BIAS AGAINST NON-EUROPEANS, BUT BECAUSE IT IS SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE TO ALLOW IN SEVERAL THOUSAND ASIAN AND EURASIAN SETTLERS EACH YEAR.

FOLLOWING THIS, THE APOLOGISTS EXPLAIN THAT GREATER NUMBERS OF ASIANS WOULD CREATE THE KIND OF DISASTROUS RACE-RELATIONS AND COMMUNAL DIFFICULTIES WHICH HAVE BEEN SEEN TO OCCUR IN THE

U.S. AND THE U.K.

I BELIEVE THAT REASONING IS HOLLOW. AUSTRALIA NOW GRANTS ASSISTED PASSAGES TO CERTAIN CLASSES OF EUROPEAN OR MIDDLE-EASTERN IMMIGRANTS WHO HAVE LITTLE OR NO ABILITY TO COPE ADEQUATELY WITH THE DEMANDS OF AN INDUSTRIALISED COMMON LAW SOCIETY.

IN THE MEANTIME IN ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AFRICA, AND NORTH AMERICA, THERE ARE HIGHLY SKILLED, OR HIGHLY COMPETENT, OR LEARNED, OR APPROPRIATELY SOCIALLY EDUCATED PEOPLE, WHO WOULD ADD DESIRABLY DIVERSE QUALITIES TO THE AUSTRALIAN NATION, WITHOUT CREATING THE COMMUNAL TENSIONS WHICH SOME CLASSES OF EUROPEANS BRING WITH THEM.

AND I SAY THIS ADVISEDLY, BECAUSE ASSIMILATION IN A COUNTRY SHOULD NOT MEAN HOMOGENISATION.

NOW PERSONALLY, AND AS PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND A LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY, I FIND THE CURRENT FEDERAL IMMIGRATION POLICY MOST OFFENSIVE. AND I BELIEVE IT HAS LONG TERM DIPLOMATIC DANGERS FOR AUSTRALIA. THE PEOPLE OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, IN PARTICULAR, ARE SIMPLY NOT GOING TO BE IMPRESSED WITH AN AUSTRALIA THAT, ON THE ONE HAND PLEADS FOR CLOSE AND EFFECTIVE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TIES, AND ON THE OTHER INSISTS ON INDICATING A FAIRLY DEFINITE STANCE OF ETHNIC SUPERIORITY. MY CRITICS HOLD THAT MOST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD ARE LIKE AUSTRALIA IN THAT THEY INSIST ON A FAIRLY HOMOGENEOUS POPULATION. THEY MENTION AS EXAMPLES MALAYSIA AND JAPAN. THEY ALSO CLAIM THAT TO ALLOW LARGE INFUX OF NON-EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS WOULD LOWER

THE QUALITIES OF AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, CREATE GHETTOS, AND BRING WITH THEM RACIAL TENSIONS.

WELL, FIRSTLY, I DO NOT WISH TO MAKE ANY COMMENT UPON THE IMMIGRATION POLICIES OF ANY COUNTRY OTHER THAN AUSTRALIA. BUT IN ANY CASE, NEITHER MALAYSIA NOR JAPAN HAVE MIGRATION POLICIES OF ACTIVE RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL POPULATION.

I SIMPLY HOLD THE OPINION THAT ASSIMILATION DOES NOT AND SHOULD NOT MEAN HOMOGENISATION. IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE HIGHLY DIVERGENT CULTURAL STYLES IN A COMMUNITY WITHOUT RACIAL OR SOCIAL CONFLICT. AND I BELIEVE THAT THIS SHOULD BE THE CASE WITH AUSTRALIA.

BUT ALL THE SAME THE KIND OF IMMIGRATION PROGRAMME WE SHOULD HAVE IN AUSTRALIA SHOULD IN THIS RESPECT, I BELIEVE, BE ONE WHICH AVOIDS PRESSURES ON JOBS AND SERVICES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IN THE FUTURE OUR IMMIGRATION PROGRAMME WILL BE CUT BACK, THE ASSISTED PASSAGE SCHEME WILL END; AND A PERIOD OF AUSTRALIAN POPULATION CONSOLIDATION AND CONTROL WILL BE ENTERED.

BUT EVEN IF THIS OCCURS, MANY PEOPLE OF VARIOUS NATIONALITIES WILL STILL WISH TO SETTLE IN AUSTRALIA. THE DIFFERENCE WILL BE IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS. AND THEREFORE IT SEEMS TO ME, AND THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY, THAT THEIR ACCEPTANCE SHOULD BE ON GROUNDS THAT IN NO WAY CAN BE CONSTRUED TO BE RACIAL, RELIGIOUS OR NATIONAL, AND THAT WITH ALL GROUPS ENTERING AUSTRALIA, THE FACILITIES OFFERED BY THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE SEEN TO BE THE SAME.

I COMMENCED THIS TALK WITH THE POINT THAT AUSTRALIA'S MIND IS CHANGING. AND SO IT IS. I HAVE SAID THAT IT WAS THE LABOR MOVEMENT, THE UNIONS, WHICH DEMANDED AN END TO ASIAN MIGRATION IN THE LAST CENTURY. AS AN INDICATION OF THE CHANGE, FOUR WEEKS AGO IN LAUNCESTON THE A.L.P. FEDERAL CONFERENCE, WHICH IS THE PARTY'S SUPREME POLICY MAKING BODY, AND WHICH IS STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY TRADE UNIONS, UNANIMOUSLY REAFFIRMED ITS 1965 DECISION TO REMOVE THE WORDS WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY FROM ITS PLATFORM, AND IN ADDITION INSERTED A NEW CLAUSE IN THE PLATFORM TO THE EFFECT THAT A FEDERAL LABOR GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE AN IMMIGRATION POLICY BASED UPON "THE AVOIDANCE OF DISCRIMINATION ON ANY GROUNDS OF RACE OR COLOUR OF SKIN OR NATIONALITY." POLITICAL PARTIES BOTH REFLECT AND GUIDE PUBLIC OPINION. AND THAT IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH MY PARTY, AS A WHOLE, HAS CHANGED.

PAGE 21.

AS A REFORM PARTY AND THE LARGEST POLITICAL PARTY IN AUSTRALIA THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY HAS WITHIN ITS RANKS BOTH CONSERVATIVE POWER GROUPS AND RADICAL INNOVATORS. THE UNANIMITY OF THE DECISION TO MAKE CLEAR A NON-RACIALLY DISCRIMINATORY POLICY IS THEREFORE AN INDICATION OF HOW DISTINCTLY ITS ATTITUDES HAVE CHANGED IN THIS REGARD.

AND SO, HERE I AM IN SINGAPORE, IN FACT PERFORMING ONE OF THE ROLES WHICH IS BRINGING AUSTRALIA INTO ASIA. AND WITHIN A YEAR AND A HALF THERE WILL BE A GENERAL ELECTION IN AUSTRALIA. AS THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY GOES NOW AND HAS FOR SOME TIME, AND THIS SEEN IN RELATION TO VOTING FIGURES IN KEY ELECTORATES, THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY'S NATIONAL LEADER, GOUGH WHITLAM, WILL THEN BE LEADING MY COUNTRY'S NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

PAGE 22.

THIS CHANGE WILL MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO BOTH THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA AND OF THE ASIAN-PACIFIC REGION.

THE NEW POLICIES THAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY A LABOR PARTY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL NOT CAST ASIAN COUNTRIES IN THE ROLE OF A ROW OF DOMINOES, BUT RATHER AN AREA OF HIGH CIVILISATION AND INCREASING DEVELOPMENT.

IN ADDITION, AUSTRALIA WITH A FEDERAL LABOR GOVERNMENT, WILL NOT BE INDULGING ITSELF IN DISASTROUS AND IMMORAL WARS AGAINST ASIAN PEOPLE.

AS FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA, MY GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PURSUE POLICIES THAT ARE LABOR PARTY POLICIES. AND THEREFORE TODAY I HAVE SPOKEN I HOPE WITHOUT PLATITUDE ABOUT SEVERAL ASPECTS OF AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS WHICH MOST SERIOUSLY CONCERN THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY AND ALL OF US HERE TODAY.

THANK YOU.